In sum, V. has produced a book that is quite important for our understanding of the Roman economic world, and well beyond. It merits a large and attentive audience.

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ROME'S STAMMERING CLIENTS

T. S. BURNS: *Rome and the Barbarians, 100 B.C.–A.D. 400*. Pp. xvi + 461, maps, ills. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003. Cased, £37. ISBN: 0-8018-7306-1.

Ever since the Prophet Jeremiah foresaw a cauldron of peoples poured on Jerusalem from the north (*Jeremiah* 1:13–15), and since the Cimmerians swept into Anatolia and thence into Herodotus' *Histories* (1.6, 15–16), western historiographers have been fascinated with northern intruders. Fascination often breeds exaggeration. In the present work, B. exhibits curiosity rather than enchantment, and is thus able to fashion a more balanced portrait than do most observers.

B. treats 500 years of Roman interaction with northerners, from the days of the Cimbri and Teutones until the morrow of the Gothic influx. He sets his story on two stages, both nebulous and fluctuating—the pinnacle of Roman society and what might be called Northern Frontierland. The players on the first stage were ever-changing, while the second once stood between the Po and Rhone estuaries, but then moved to the drainages of the Rhine and Danube. During the half-millennium under study, the dramas ran simultaneously on each stage. Their course and direction depended on two principles, and on two ancient perceptions of the players. The principles first: (i) the most abiding contacts between Romans and northerners were those occurring in the Roman army; and (ii) the interactions were not the result of massive intrusions of northerners into Roman territory. And the two perceptions, one to be preferred over the other. Borrowing from the Greeks, the Romans called the northerners *barbari*—savages, stammering brutes. The cultural animus behind such a term is evident, and thus B. keeps a distance from it. He prefers another Roman characterization, one which the supposedly speech-impaired roughnecks were disposed to accept. The northerners were clients, their patrons at first being individual (and distinguished) Romans and later the Roman state. The Roman government maintained treaty relations with a leader, the principal client, and by extension the people he ruled. Now, having set perceptions and principles in order (pp. 1–41, an introductory chapter), B. is ready to generate the two dramas. From Caesar's Rhineland campaigns until the aftermath of Julian's victory at Argentoratum, the mingling of Romans and their neighbors in Northern Frontierland produced a composite society; B. gives special attention to one case, the emergence of the Alamannic confederation. Meanwhile, the second and perhaps more chaotic drama was unfolding in the centers of Roman power. In the time of the Roman Dominate, some of the habits and even the players from Northern Frontierland came to the top of Roman society, their arrival at this dizzying height being the result of commander-and-troop interactions since the third century and a sudden big intrusion of northerners after the Battle of Adrianople. It will be useful to quote the sections in which B. sets forth the fundamentals of his

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interpretation. On the soldier-emperors of the late third century: 'Most of these emperors and their rivals were generals from the Danubian legions, but this was merely a reflection of the circumstances that made this area the principal theater of imperial operations and recruitment rather than some special characteristic of the Balkans' (p. 261). And the post-Adrianople invasions: 'the fifth century . . . heralded the first hostile penetrations of the empire that were to prove irreversible . . . The presence of the Huns as a military superpower based on the steppes of Russia altered the cultural equation along the old Danubian frontier' (pp. 383–4).

In general, B. has presented a remarkably even-handed portrait of Roman-northern action and reaction, a portrait made effective especially by the novel distancing from the Roman conception of 'the barbarian'. But B.'s understanding of the term *barbarus* is one- instead of three-dimensional. Furthermore, B. relaxes his vigilance against the ancient sources' exaggerations of intruding numbers only once—at the end of his account. A discussion of the three Roman usages of the word *barbarus* is in order. So too an alternative view of what happened after Adrianople. The result is a different perspective on the Age of Theodosius—an interpretation that stands closer to the principles B. adopts at the beginning of his study.

The Roman understanding of the term *barbarus* was ever complex. The Greek usage indeed made up one layer of meaning, but here there was a sardonic tinge born of the Romans' awareness that they too were hopeless stammerers in the eyes of the Greeks. Plautus, for instance, gave voice to the idea in puckish salutes to the Greek originals of his plays (e.g. *Asinaria* 10–12, *Trinummus* 18–21). As the Roman Empire grew to maturity and then embraced Christianity, the word *barbarus* acquired another twist, this one coming from the Hebrew (and hence Christian) disdain for the unbelieving outsider. Paulus Orosius, to take one example, put the two understandings together in a sumptuous dismissal of the Gothic chieftain Radigais (early fifth century; *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* [hereafter *PLRE*], II, s.n.): Radigais was *paganus barbarus et vere Scytha* (*Historiae adversum paganos* 7.37.5–9). During the Dominate the term *barbarus* acquired yet another overtone, this one being best understood if the event that gave impetus to it, a major change in the Roman army, receives simultaneous attention.

During the difficult third century senators based in Italy and the western provinces lost control of the high command and hence the emperorship. This Roman revolution and its consequences receive good attention in B.'s book. One specific event, the impulse for the change, is missing. Soon after his accession, Septimius Severus disbanded the old Praetorian Guard and reconstituted it with legionaries, many of them from the Danubian provinces (cf. M. Durry, *Les cohortes prétoriennes* [Paris, 1938], pp. 384–5). The dramatic change soon assured a succession of Danubian and upper-Balkan soldier-emperors, beginning with Maximin I (R. Syme, *Emperors and Biography* [Oxford, 1971], pp. 185–90) and continuing with such primary figures as Aurelian and Diocletian (*PLRE*, I, s.nn.). How durable the new emperor-producing mechanism was may be judged from the beginnings of Constantine I and Justin I, founders of two major dynasties of the Dominate and originating from Naïssus and nearby Castra Bederiana, in Dacia Mediterranea (*PLRE*, I and II, s.nn.). Of course the new-style emperors needed helpers, many of whom were northerners like themselves, recruited into the core or the fringe of the army as individuals or ethnic units. The old-line western senators stood aside from these stunning developments, in shock and horror. The common ancient version of Maximin's background is a measure of their repulsion. To Herodian (*Ab excessu Divi Marci* 6.8.1) Maximin came from 'the innermost Thracians and mixed savages'. Three later sources, including the

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late fifth-century senator Q. Aurelius Memmius Symmachus, elaborated, giving Maximin lower-Danubian parents of Gothic and Alanic stock (H. Peter, *Historicorum romanorum reliquiae* [1904–6^2], II.156–8; *Historia Augusta* [hereafter *HA*] 19.1.5–6; and Jordanes *Getica* 83). In the *HA*'s life of Aurelian one finds another interesting put-down, in the form of a fake dispatch of Emperor Valerian to the soldier Aurelian. Aurelian now has command of an unbelievably miscellaneous body of troops, and four strangely named sub-commanders: *Tecum erit Hariomundus, Haldagates, Hildomundus, Carioviscus* (*HA* 26.11.1–10 esp. 4). The names are as phony as the dispatch (R. Syme, *Ammianus and the Historia Augusta* [Oxford, 1968], p. 173), but based on real Germanic roots such as *Harja-* and *Hildi-* (E. Förstemann, *Altdeutsches Namenbuch, I: Personennamen* [1900], s.nn.). The message is clear. Aurelian, here a metaphor for Danubian soldier-emperors of the *HA* author's own day, is as uncouth as the Germanic commanders on whom he relies.

The third Roman usage of the term *barbarus* now comes into view. Around the year 400, the closing date of B.'s investigation, the Roman élite began to add the epithet *barbarus* to a long-standing and rich treasury of politically-charged derogatory terms. The best introduction to the appearance of *barbari* in late Roman politics is still Ronald Syme's discussion of 'political catchwords' (*Roman Revolution* [Oxford, 1939], Chapter 11). For an old-style senator or his sympathizers, the arrival of five roughneck outsiders at the pinnacle of Roman society was a threat to order, even an invasion.

By the turn of the fifth century, then, stammering brutes joined eunuchs and other undesirables in the back-washes of Roman political discourse. The idea of *barbari* as threatening invaders is the ancient fountainhead of another, much more serious intrusion, still commonly called the *Völkerwanderung*, a major event supposedly occurring around the middle of the first millennium. Was there indeed a major in-rush beginning around 400? Yes, says B., the Huns, who set other northerners in motion. A generation ago, O. J. Maenchen-Helfen and his students (*The World of the Huns* [Berkeley, 1973]) turned the Huns from a steppe-based surging tide into a numerically small group of mixed ethnic origin, exquisitely adept at manipulating peoples and governments. Maenchen-Helfen wrote and investigated within a framework most notably set by the recusant Hans Delbrück, who summarized his views in a London lecture (*Numbers in History* [1914]) before elaborating them in his *Geschichte der Kriegskunst* (7 vols, Berlin, 1920–36; cf. esp. II.300–16). Small numbers of intruders are inherent in the Goffart–Durliat perception of the fifth-century 'barbarian' settlements (cf. H. Wolfram et al., *Anerkennung und Integration* [Vienna, 1988], pp. 21–85). Recently C. R. Whittaker has given eloquent support to the idea (e.g. *Revue du Nord: Archéologie* 77 [1995], 11–20). The *Völkerwanderung* is one of the great non-events of the late Roman Empire.

Now back to B.'s work. Its basic structure stands, enhanced rather than diminished, after the removal of a big in-burst of northern intruders after 400. For a half-millennium the Mediterranean Basin was a Roman preserve. Romans interacted with northerners, especially within the military. Northern Frontierland was forever transformed. Eventually some of the northerners, and their habits, rose to the top of Roman society. B. has written a useful book.

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